

I Don't Want Your Cooties

I.

Recess is always the same thing. Every day the girls get together on the basketball court to play four square or UNICORN (our version of PIG because unicorns are cooler) until *he* ruins it. His name is Cody Pope. But around these parts, we call him “Kissing” Cody Pope.

My mom says that Cody is just girl crazy, or being a copy cat and doing what boy do on TV. But girls *really* don't like to be kissed. He should know that. Everyone in the first grade knows that boys have cooties, girls don't want them and the only way to get cooties is by being kissed. But Cody Pope wants to spread his cooties anyways. Gross.

Today wasn't any different. Cody came charging up the hill to the basketball court and we all fled. Like always, he chased after me.

“Sarah, I love you!”

“Sarah, I'm *going* to kiss you!”

“Saaaaraaaaah!!!”

Why does Kissing Cody Pope always have to come after me?

I run faster than I ever have before. Usually if I can make it to the jungle gym and climb under, the other kids will hide me. My feet dash across the hard pavement, then suddenly land in the soft grass that is wet and sticks to my jeans. I hate having wet jeans. I hit the rocks. I slide through one of the bright yellow and blue holes of the jungle gym and clamber to my feet. My hands are covered in a dust

and reddish mud. I wipe them on my jeans so the tops so my jeans are now more red, green and brown than the original blue. Mom is going to kill me.

I look up and there are no kids covering the metal bars to protect me from sight. Instead, they're all running around up on the pavement.

"Oh Saraaaah, I see you!" I hear Cody's voice singing triumphantly behind me.

I take off, but I slip in the mud. Pulling myself back to my feet, I feel his on hand on my shoulder. He's caught me. I spin around and Cody stares at me.

"Kiss me my darling," he says puffing out his chest and smiling like the Cheshire cat.

He licks his lips before sticking them out in a circle so I can see his two front teeth and leans forward. I watch as he pushes his tongue through his lips as if he is going to stick that thing in my mouth.

I remembered what my mom said about how he learned all this stuff by watching TV. Well last week my mom was watching her weekly lifetime movie while my sister and I played in our cardboard house in the living room. This one girl was screaming a lot so I watched as she fought the bad man. The girl put her hands on the bad man's shoulders and then raised her knee really hard and hit him. I look around to see if anyone is watching before sticking my hands on his shoulders. He thinks I am finally going to kiss him. His face inches slightly closer to mine as I take one last look around, his chicken nugget breath hitting my face, then quick like lightning I raise my knee.

BAM!

He's on the ground in tears, and I'm running like mad, through the dirty rocks, up the slippery grass, until I'm safely with my friends.

Cody will never try to kiss *me* again.

II.

I hate Kissing Cody. My mom says that hate is a strong word, so I guess I really just dislike Kissing Cody. But what I really do hate is that my mom told his grandma I would go play with him after school today.

Doesn't she *know* we call him KISSING Cody Pope for a reason?

I'm seven and daddy says that's too young to be kissed. But mom made me go play at his house anyway. She even knows that he wants to kiss me! If I get kissed it's her fault.

I guess it started okay at Cody's house. We watched *Lady and the Tramp* (which is my favorite movie) and he didn't make fun of me when I danced with the Siamese cats. Most of my friends tease me that I know all the words and dance a long. But it's my favorite part, what am I supposed to do? Sit quietly? I don't think so! And Cody understood that, so I thought he could be my friend. Just Friends. But boy was I wrong.

Cody took me outside and showed me his Frisbee and all of his bright blue and green soccer ball and baseball set. We accidentally kicked the soccer ball into the dog house. She would bark whenever we got near and snap her gigantic yellow teeth at us. His grandma said she was just playing, but she's GINORMOUS and scary, so we went to the Frisbee. That landed on the roof and his grandma was watching the baby, so she couldn't get it down or take us to the park to play baseball. We had no choice but to head back to his room where he was going to make me watch Power Rangers. I really do hate the Power Rangers. They're lame. *Even* the pink one. But he got a Strawberry Fruit by the Foot for us to share and that made it all better.

Cody thought it would be funny if we ate it together like they do in *Lady and the Tramp*. So I got the good end (you know the end that doubles over) and he got the bad end. He was eating really fast and then started eating my half, and even though he promised not to kiss me, I knew he was going to try to trick me. I could feel his nose breath getting closer to my face and his lips puckered and ...

... I punched him.

I threw my arm straight out and I hit him right in the nose. Hard. Just like Mom told me to do if someone ever tries to take me. Except she said I should aim for the eyes. But I missed the eyes and hit his nose instead. By the time my Mom picked me up it was bleeding a lot and Cody wouldn't stop crying. I lied and told him I was sorry over and over again, but that didn't make his nose any better.

My mom told me that even if I didn't want him to kiss me, I probably shouldn't have hit him and now I have to write this stupid apology note. Apparently, "Sorry you tried to kiss me" doesn't count. So here's what I'll say: "Dear Cody, I'm sorry you I punched you because I thought you were going to kiss me. I hope your nose gets better. – Sarah." But on the back I'll add, "PS If you ever try to kiss me again, I'll tell everyone you got beat up by a girl."